ZANE BOYD

A SELECTION OF EMAIL CORRESPONDENCE, LETTERS & PUBLISHED ARTICLES

As presented to the Memorial gathering honouring his life, in Toronto, November 24, 2013

PART 3: email correspondence from Zane Boyd

2003-June 15	Email re: Cuba email list & comments
2003-June 22	Email to R. F. re: Reply to James Petras on Intellectuals and Cuba
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2003-Aug. 8	Email, re: *New Politics* Cuba section (plus) Letter to *Canadian Dimension*
2003-Aug.23	Email re: The Blackout, Public Power & Ecology
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2003-Oct. 3	(Second email) re : Petras et al and Cuba, etc.
2003-Nov. 12	Email to John, re: Russia

Subject: **Cuba email list + comments**
Sun. 15 Jun 2003

Dear Comrades,

Attached is a list of persons and publications I've sent my reply to Petras to so far. (I intend to send it out to still other publications and persons-- note that I was unsuccessful in reaching a few of the people on the list, either because I didn't have their email address or I had an old or wrong address. (If any of you have the current correct address for these persons, please forward them to me.)

I'm also forwarding you separately the responses I've received to my reply thus far. Interestingly, only Richard Fidler and Darrel Furlotte have done so. (Doug Williams sent a friendly and encouraging thank you note. Cy Gonick replied saying that *Canadian Dimension* plans to carry part of Petras's article in its July issue along with a response from another of CD's editorial collective, of which Petras happens to be a member.)

Re Fidler's point that the Polish government under Walesa after (the by-then transformed) Solidarnosc won political power did in fact close the Gdansk shipyards, he's right on this point. I guess I misread Petras on this. I'm not sure exactly how I should respond on this particular point. However, it doesn't affect my general contention, i.e., that the Soviet and East European regimes did NOT fall because of the machinations of dissidents backed by the U.S. State Dept. and Western capitalists like Soros, but rather because of built-up longstanding social contradictions within these countries themselves engendered by the policies of their bureaucratic regimes and the lack of socialist democracy.

I'm interested in your responses to Darrel's forwarded email and attached document from a member of Solidarity in the US, Jose Perez.

That's it for now. Please do phone me to discuss these and other issues, since I won't be in town for a while and therefore won't have an opportunity to do so at the upcoming Group meeting(s).

Zane

To: Richard Fidler
Sent: Sunday, June 22, 2003

Subject: Reply to James Petras on Intellectuals and Cuba

Dear Richard,

It's petunias, not peonies, I'm tending to!

I want to share with you the decided and definitive reason for my becoming an anti-Stalinist and Trotskyist in the 1960s. It was when my father—who was then still editor of the *Canadian Tribune* and before he left the Canadian Communist Party because of his support of the Czech and Slovak "dissidents" and the Warsaw Pact's invasion of the country—when he said to me, "Who are you to criticize the Soviet authorities? They know better than you!"

Richard, as a socialist and internationalist, I reserve the right—in fact, it is my responsibility—to critique the negative policies of any so-called socialist regime, be it China, Vietnam, North Korea or, yes, Cuba. This is while, at the same time, recognizing the enormous contributions that the Fidelista government has contributed to Cuban society.

On the matter of the Polish movement, Solidarnosc, I stand corrected. James Petras is right. The Polish government under Lech Walesa did, in fact, close the Gdansk shipyards. On the other hand, the bourgeoisification of the Solidarnosc movement is the direct responsibility of Jareweseki's declaration of martial law. The original 1980 program was decidedly pro-socialist.

Richard, have you, in fact, actually read this revolutionary document. I suggest that you do. It is a monument to what socialism could and, in fact, should be.

It is an absolute shame that the only socialist organization in Canada to publish Solidarnosc's program was the fledging Forward Group.

Regarding the matter of Cuba's isolation, I agree with you that the Cuban regime enjoys widespread support among people around the world. My contention, however, is that Cuba is ECONOMICALLY isolated. And that is the threat to the Revolution. As I said, the pro-market economic reforms of the Cuban regime have created serious social divisions in Cuban society And that is my reason for indicating that the Revolution is in danger of imploding within.

On a final matter, you condemn what you call petty-bourgeois opinion. May I remind you that the leadership of Cuba is also petit-bourgeois, including Fidel himself and the economic technocrats responsible for the pro-market reforms.

June 25, 2003
Re: **Reply to James Petras on Intellectuals and Cuba**

Dear Richard,

Thanks for your reply.
Yes, I do disagree: I do feel the trials and sentences-or more specifically the way in which they were conducted and carried out—have had a negative impact on the Cuban revolution and society, as well as on international support, and that they were, to that degree, indefensible. I'm not saying there shouldn't have been any trials or sentences, but they were handled arbitrarily and injudiciously. Had they been held in a truly open manner in the full light of Cuban and international opinion, they might have actually proven a positive and educational experience in exposing the anti-Cuban manipulations of U.S. imperialism in Cuba. Instead, the fidelista leadership acted in an entirely bureaucratic and expedient manner.

Clearly, what I'm saying should have taken place is not show trials, but rather real public trials with full deliberation involving public prosecution and also the opportunity for real and informed defence. Nor do I equate what did occur with anything remotely on the order of the Moscow Trials. The fidelista leadership, in any case, is not Stalinist. However, it must nevertheless be said that it does suffer from bureaucratic excesses and deformities, as does Cuban society.

Secondly, I don't see how criticizing the way these trials were conducted or the sentences handed down in anyway prevents or precludes me from taking aim as you suggest against Cuba's economic isolation, Canada's and especially the U.S. role in reinforcing that isolation, as well as against the U.S. military threat to Cuba.

One of the key contentions in my reply to Petras, which I stand by, is my contention that so many defenders of Cuba these days are responding in an hysterical and abject manner to any criticism of Cuba not unlike the millions of supporters of the Soviet Union under Stalin. Which is NOT to say, by the way, that I'm accusing them of being Stalinists either. I shouldn't even have to say this, but I feel a need to do so precisely because of the hysterical atmosphere and unidimensional perspective infecting this whole matter.

Thirdly, my rather sardonic reference to who and who isn't "petty-bourgeois" had more to do with what I feel is a marked and longstanding tendency among the Marxist left to use this term not as a social scientific designation, but more as a term of vilification and ostracism. Which is why I chose to spell the term "petit-bourgeois" in its original correct manner, there being nothing "petty" in the implications of the term. The intelligentsia ARE petit-bourgeois—as are small farmers and peasantry, professional classes, artists, technocrats, and so on. All these petit-bourgeois are to one degree or another necessary potential allies of the revolution, if it is to succeed. Anyway, somehow the term "proletarian intellectuals" just doesn't cut it, does it? But this, admittedly, was a minor and secondary point in my previous response to you.

Fourthly, on Solidarnosc, I too read Persky's book, several times as I recall, while I was one of the principle organizers of a cross-Canada defence campaign for Solidarnosc under martial law in 1982. Regarding your professed misgivings about what some of the 32 documents other than Solidarnosc's program that Persky's Sourcebook contained, I ask you: how could discrepancies within Solidarnosc's leadership and the movement as a whole NOT exist when, after all, this so-called "union" came to comprise virtually the entire Polish working class along with students, intellectuals, and farmers prior to the declaration of martial law. My point was and is that it was martial law itself that thwarted the socialist self-management direction formulated in Solidarnosc's program. Its entire leadership, especially its more sophisticated leftwing intellectual leadership, was decapitated and the self-management bodies which were the organizational base of the movement were smashed. Only after Jaruzelski couldn't sustain Polish Stalinism against continued underground resistance, what emerged was a by-then transformed

bourgeois electoral Solidarnosc, in name only, under Walesa (himself never any theoretician, of course, but by that time an out-and-out political opportunist) along with other right wing leaders who had abandoned any notion of or interest in workers' power....But yes, I agree, this is perhaps another debate.

As for Cuba, my main and essential argument remains that the revolution desperately requires—as does any successful truly socialist revolution—fully fledged socialist democracy. This is necessary to allow the mass of society to guard against external threat, to deal with internal economic and social divisions, to combat passivity, as well as to help isolate and neutralize actual counter-revolutionary opposition. More than this, it is necessary to ensure the fullest possible participation of the entire population in actively running the country.

Richard, I put it to you as well as to others bluntly: are you in favor of the continued exclusive one-party system in Cuba? If so, why and to what end? If not, how and when do you see a pluralistic, thorough-going socialist democracy coming about in the country? Or does this just not figure or matter in your view?

Anyway, perhaps I'll see you at the Moncada anniversary and protest at Toronto's U.S. consulate on July 26th, as I expect to be in the city that weekend.

Yours, Zane

June 29, 2003

Subject: Bad dudes and boneheads (Stephen Gowans)

Like Richard Fidler, I too wish we had a daily leftist mass-circulation newspaper here in Canada. Td subscribe to it and even circulate it. On the other hand, I'm afraid that if Stephen Gowans were writing lead editorials or a daily front-page column for it as Fidler would have it, I'd decidedly be using the kind of diatribe he's written in "Bad dudes and boneheads" to line my cat-litter box instead!

Gowans' piece is nothing more than yet another unprincipled, flimsy smear against Chomsky, Alpert, and various other "left intellectuals", in this case on the war on Iraq, backed by quotes taken entirely out of the context in which they were written.

I hope some of you took the time to actually open the URLs cited among the references at the conclusion of Gowans' smug little rant. I hope you took the the time to read what Chomsky actually says in ZNet's lengthy interview by Michael Albert. I hope you also read what Albert himself says in full in his and Stephen R Shalom's "Ten Q & A On Antiwar Organizing". And I hope you even dared to peruse in its totality that by-now infamous CPD Statement on Iraq "WE OPPOSE Both Saddam Hussein and the U.S. War on Iraq call for a new, democratic U.S. foreign policy".

At one time, some of you may recall — alas, it seems SO long ago now — we once talked about the importance of "defensive formulations", of which the latter statement and petition actually happens to be an especially fine example. No longer, I suppose, in the new (yet, in truth, not-so-

new) age of stand-up-and-be-counted, you're-with-us-or-your-against-us style of sycophantic socialism! (Did I say socialism? Dear me!) Oh, how the middling have fallen!

I'm afraid Old History's chickens are once again coming home to roost. Those who don't learn from it — or more to the point these days, who would rather turn their backs on it — are doomed lay a big fat egg!

It's little wonder Chomsky, Albert, Ehrenreich, Zinn and the dozens of "otherwise progressive" Western intellectuals (to use James Petras's flippant putdown) have largely ignored the reams of wrath heaped on them for weeks now by the self-styled, self-proclaimed and oh-so-self-righteous true believers in the faith. In their shoes, I would too, by not stooping to dignify a response to such dimwitted drivel.

(Hey, I guess that puts me in THEIR camp, doesn't it. Huh? Huh?)

Zane Boyd...
PS: If you detect a note of dismissive sarcasm in the above, you're right. I've had it with this kind of trumped-up tripe coming from supposedly principled socialists and anti-imperialists!

August 8, 2003
Re: *New Politics* Cuba section
Dear Richard,

Evidently I'm guilty by association and thereby my argument conveniently dismissed. I don't exactly see the Castroist, Trotskyist, ex-Trotskyist (whatever!) press carrying an open and earnest debate on these matters, which I would have been glad to participate in and in fact attempted to do. As for associations, you and various other former members of the Canadian Trotskyist movement evidently have no compunction about "aligning" yourselves with what might also be considered "renegades" from Trotskyism. So what, if I do contribute to a magazine that includes "Schachtmanites"? And what if I even happen to agree with some of their criticisms regarding this matter? Does this mean that I de facto subscribe to their particular theoretical and programmatic outlook on Cuba, not to mention on other issues? I'm sorry, but I long ago rejected the taint-by-association fundamentalism so endemic among the would-be revolutionary left.

As for *Canadian Dimension's* "more balanced" debate on recent developments in Cuba and "much more adequate presentation of context", below is a letter I've written to CD in response. CD's coverage of the Cuban events in its most recent issue was in fact heavily weighted toward accommodation and apologias vis-à-vis the Cuban government's actions. First, there was CD's editorial itself. Next, Geoff Bickerton's feel-good column on Canadian unionists' warm relations with their Cuban counterparts, a piece that reminded me of similar rosy articles that used to appear in the CP's *Canadian Tribune* that my dad once edited. This is followed by Washington-based Saul Landau's tortuous mess in which, after spending 90% of his article rationalizing the Cuban government's actions, he concludes by saying he thinks the arrests and executions were wrong; only heaven knows why! Eduardo Galeano's short but poignant appeal comes next, only to be upstaged by a toned-down yet still rather lengthy edition of James Petras's original tirade against Chomsky et al. CD's Andrea Levy is granted a brief yet incisive reply to Petras, which Petras nevertheless gets a chance to rebut. Vancouver's Michael Lebowitz gets two full pages to

essentially mirror Petras's views. Then comes an embarrassingly trite and condescending dissertation by Karen Wald of California in praise of "democracy, Cuban-style". CD's Cuba coverage concludes with an otherwise fine outline of the Cuban Five.

You call this balanced!
Yours, Zane . . .

Now here's my letter to *Canadian Dimension*:

Dear *Canadian Dimension* editors:

With 85 years' experience with so-called "actually existing socialism", socialists as well as the broader left long ago earned the right and indeed the obligation to criticize and even condemn the actions of existing socialist governments. All the more so now, when Cuba remains the only self-proclaimed socialist country that retains any degree of credibility and following among radical forces and continues to represent socialism in the eyes of the world.

Socialists and the left should have earned this right free from scurrilous attacks such as that which James Petras launched in May of this year. *Canadian Dimension* unfortunately omitted the worst offending passages of Petras' original article, in which he falsifies the actual positions of the intellectuals he attacks, insinuates that their actual aim is to curry favour with the U.S. State Department, and accuses them of essentially being patsies of U.S. imperialism.

It is hypocritical of Petras to chastise Andrea Levy for resorting to an alleged personal and uncomradely diatribe when his own vituperative piece makes it hard to take any valid argument he may have seriously and effectively discourages further debate. His attack on leftwing intellectuals, as well as similar tirades by other pro-fidelista socialists, is in fact reminiscent of the kind of sycophancy and hysteria that infected millions of Communist Party members and their intellectual fellow travelers in the West when confronted with any opposition to or criticism of Soviet Stalinism in the 1930s. Back then as well, any problems within the Soviet Union were blamed entirely on the threats and machinations of Western imperialism, Fascism, and various plotters—including Trotskists, anarchists and "social fascists" (viz., Social Democrats). Then as well, it was "you're with us or against us". Back then, too, anyone who criticized or denounced the Soviet regime was branded either an accomplice or agent in the pay of the CIA and Hitler.

What about Cuba today? Michael Lebowitz concludes his CD article asking "friends of Cuba who are criticizing Cuba at this moment" what they would do at this time. Well, regarding those charged and arrested, the fidelista regime should have at least tried them in full view of the world. If it had the goods on these people, why didn't it expose them for the stooges they allegedly are, along with the various machinations of the U.S. government. Instead, Castro and foreign minister Perez Roque were forced to explain their summary actions after the events.

The entire matter of the trials and this kind of oppositional activity is problematic, however, and the Castro leadership knows this. If there were real freedom of the press in Cuba and real freedom of organization including the right to alternative parties and associations based on alternative political and social programs, would many of the accused have turned to foreign assistance to publish their views and to organize in opposition? Admittedly, most if not all the accused are staunchly pro-market and pro-bourgeois democracy, as should be noted is a significant proportion of the Cuban population including a growing number of youth. However, the response of socialists should not be to shut them up, but instead to engage these and other

views in open debate within a framework of full-fledged socialist democracy.

What we don't need are sophist lectures on the precedence of "social and economic rights" over democratic human rights such as CD contributor Karen Wald offers up. As though democratic rights were some luxury and prerogative of privileged intellectuals and not an essential requirement of the poor and oppressed to exercise authentic control over their collective and individual social and economic conditions. Instead of banal comparisons between Cuban democracy and the sham bourgeois democracy of El Salvador(!) and the United States, socialists have various lessons and experiences with workers' and socialist democracy, both negative and positive, from which to draw on—the workers' and peasants' Soviets (viz., councils) of the Russian revolution, the years of Stalinist dictatorship, the programs of socialist opposition movements to Stalinism, the workers self-management movement in Yugoslavia, the socialist program of the Czech and Slovak reformers in 1968, the Polish workers' self-management program of 1980. These experiences as well as those of workers' and other popular movements in capitalist and neocolonial countries should be our points of reference when discussing socialist democracy in Cuba.

With regard to the latter two instances mentioned above, it must be frankly stated that for all the well-deserved praise for their internationalism elsewhere, Castro and the Cuban Communist Party leadership failed miserably as internationalists as far as the Czech and Slovak workers in 1968 and the Polish workers in the early 1980s are concerned. Not only did Fidel support the brutal repression of the workers of Czechoslovakia in 1968, but he continued to justify it long afterwards while explicitly endorsing the policies of the hated Kremlin-imposed Husak and Lenart regimes. So much for the Cuban regime’s professed sacred right of nations to self-determination! With regard to Poland's Solidarity movement, Castro actually advocated its repression by the Kremlin a full year before the actual imposition of martial law in December 1981, while the 1980 strike-wave in fact was in full swing.

What if Castro had instead stood up to the Kremlin, sided with the workers of Czechoslovakia and Poland, engaged in discussion and debate with their leaders on the program and direction of their reform movements? Would the outcome in Eastern Europe have possibly been different? Would the international left not have eagerly embraced these workers' revolutions instead of, as they largely did, kept a long arm's length from them because of the varied and contradictory character of their programs and leaderships? And would so many leading Czech and Slovak oppositionists and leaders of Poland's Solidarity movement have subsequently turned away from socialism and embraced bourgeois ideology so readily?

Cuba requires democratization along socialist not bourgeois lines, not only so that the Cuban working class and entire population can more effectively manage and defend their country, but as an example to a world looking to an inspired alternative to capitalist oppression and pseudo-democracy. Above all, this means an end to the one-party system now over-lording Cuban society. Defenders of Cuba's Communist Party leadership must frankly be asked: do you in fact support a one-party socialist government in Cuba or elsewhere for that matter? If so, on what grounds? If not, when, how, and with what form and content do you see an alternative being realized?

Yours for Socialism,
Zane Boyd

Date: Tue, 26 Aug 2003
From: "zeebee"
Subject: The Blackout, Public Power & Ecology

Dear Comrades,

Below are two articles, one by David Suzuki from last Friday's Toronto Star, the other by Wayne R. that appeared in this past week's Now (magazine).

I feel that both articulate the kind of ecological alternatives that would be central to any planned-economy response to the current misuse and overconsumption of traditional fossil fuel-based technologies. Mind you, neither Suzuki nor even Wayne poses this within the context of a publicly owned and planned alternative. Nevertheless, in my view, it is insufficient to only support maintaining the power system within public hands without also posing the need for these kinds of essential alternative power initiatives.

Zane

Sept. 13, 2003
Subject: **re Petras-et al and Cuba, etc.**

Dear Comrades,

I've just been going over my slew of emails from over the summer, most of which I didn't read closely. Anyway, I'm sending you two messages from Phil Cournoyeur that I received in early July. I would like your comments or to discuss this with you over the phone—before I respond to Phil, admittedly belatedly.

In Phil's response to Ken Hiebert (which will follow) he makes the apparent observation that the Fidelista government has never condemned criticisms of the Cuban leadership. However, we never hear any such criticisms from abject supporters of Fidel and Co. Why? Do they in fact HAVE any criticisms. Do they, for instance, support a one-party state and, if so, why? I thought it was always Trotskyist policy to support a plurality of workers' parties in a workers' government.

Which brings me to my next point. I don't consider the Fidelista regime outright Stalinist. However, I do consider it to suffer from severe bureaucratic distortions. Does this mean I support the call for a workers' political revolution? Frankly, I honestly don't know. Can the Cuban system be reformed? Or does it require an actual mass revolt? Obviously, I'm reluctant to reach such a conclusion regarding the latter case, given my longstanding defence of the Cuban revolution. But I think we need to discuss these issues.

I've been doing some reading on the origins and events of the early years of the revolution. And frankly, I'm rather disturbed by what I read. Tad Szulc, in his "authorized" biography of Castro, claims that there was a secret cabal between the leadership of the July 26th movement and the Stalinist Communist Party from the late fall of 1959 on. I have no reason to doubt his claims, as they are based on interviews with former CP leaders themselves. Of course, it's a possibility these leaders were lying to Szulc. I don't know.

Also, when Phil makes the observation that our movement never condemned the executions of what-he-calls pro-Batista supporters, he neglects to point out that many of those executed or jailed were guerrilla fighters who belonged to the July 26th movement or other anti-Batista factions and who had anti-Communist views. (Remember, we're dealing with a national liberation struggle.)

As you can see, I'm re-evaluating my entire view of the Cuban experience in the light of historical experience and analysis. I feel it is not excluded that Castro and his leadership played an entirely top-down, acting-on-behalf-of-the-people role from the very outset. It was, after all, in the very nature of the guerrilla movement to act this way. And, I sense, this served to color the entire attitude of the early and subsequent years of the Cuban regime.

Anyway, I'm interested in your comments. Of course, I could be entirely wrong and misguided, and I'd appreciate your being frank with me if you think that is so. I can stand to be corrected, especially by my own comrades. Please reply by email or by phone.

October 3, 2003

Re: re Petras-et al and Cuba, etc.

Hi, Phil,

First, I apologize for not responding to you earlier, as I happened to have spent most of the summer away from my computer.

Second, please let me assure you that 1 don't harbour any hostility to you or, for that matter, to anyone else who takes a position of uncritical support for the Cuban regime. I admit that I could, after all, be wrong on this issue, although I don't think so. My hope is to engage in a frank and comradely discussion

My response to Petras was not based on his criticisms of the "intellectual left's" particular stance on this issue. Frankly, I consider his criticisms, in part, valid. I, for instance, would not have signed a circular petition by Joanne Landy and her colleagues or by anyone else—unless it was a petition by socialists, that is, which regrettably was not circulated. My objection to Petras is his frankly hysterical critique of Chomsky et al. based on trumped-up and slanderous charges and innuendo. Also, his sycophantic support of the Cuban regime's policies. You don't stand your own arguments in could stead by falsifying the arguments of those you criticize!

As I clearly said in my critique of Petras, his hyperbolic response to the "left intellectuals" is reminiscent of the kind of hysteria that infected millions of Communist Party members throughout the world in their response to various left critics of the Stalinist regime in the 1930 and 40s. This, let me emphasize, is meant to equate the Cuban government with the abominable regime of Joseph Stalin and his cronies. Nevertheless, it has to honestly and forcefully be pointed out that Fidel's government does suffer from severe bureaucratic distortions. Whatever theoretical analysis of this situation is admittedly complex. You and James Petras both make the point that the Cuban leadership has always tolerated criticisms of its policies from abroad. However, I have never, ever, heard you, he, or others openly express such criticisms. You seem to have an attitude, in fact, of uncritical support for the Cuban regime. You make the point that,

during the Vietnam War, we Trotskyists never criticized the nature of the Hanoi regime. I beg your pardon, but I recall myself having frankly criticized the Stalinist Vietnamese government in my speeches to high school students. At the same time I defended the Vietnamese right to self-determination and freedom from the criminal bombing and assault by Washington. I don't know if I was going against the Trotskyist party line in this (Heaven Forbid!), but it was based on my understanding of the Trotskyist critique of colonial Stalinism==as well as a healthy dose of honesty!). On another point, you make the argument that only those actively involved in defense of the Cuban revolution have the right to criticize the Cuban government. Phil, we socialists can't all be involved in Cuban defense, at least on an ongoing basis. Personally, I try to participate in demonstrations and actions against the US threat to Cuba whenever I can make it. It seems, however, that some comrades, notably the former comrades of the American SWP and the ex-Canadian comrades, are practically exclusively involved in Cuban defense, having in fact made this mission practically their sole objective. They have become in fact (I regret to say this) sycophants of Fidelismo. As far as I personally am concerned, I reserve the right as a socialist internationalist to issue whatever criticisms I may have, as informed as they may be or otherwise. I consider these criticisms to be especially justified based on my years of study of "actually existing socialism" in the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe and my active defense of dissidents within those regimes. Even having said that, however, I would (and do) support the right of any ordinary Canadian worker, student or intellectual to make similar criticisms. Not only socialists like you and myself are privileged in that regard. This is, after all, in the very nature and interest of workers' internationalism!

In short, Phil, my foundation as a Marxist is that I stand above all with the working class itself. Despite all the setbacks and hardships, I still retain confidence that under the impact of economic and social forces, the Canadian, the American AND the Cuban workers will transform their societies themselves. Frankly and regrettably, I don't necessarily have that confidence in self-proclaimed socialists, whatever their stripe.

Yours, still very fondly, Zane

Will Brant, November 12, 2003

Thanks, John.

I would like to see a copy of Ross's 1965 letter in toto, either when I'm next in town or if you can send me a photocopy.

Re "Russia: While I have a fairly good (although somewhat rusty) knowledge of the history and theory of the former Soviet Union, I must admit I haven't kept up with the various developments and any theoretical debates ensuing for t he past decade since the collapse of the former regimes that comprised the USSR. However, I would welcome the opportunity to refresh, catch up, etc. I agree that the necessary concrete analysis, theoretical issues as well as programmatic conclusions arising therefrom are required. This is also true of Eastern Europe and, perhaps even more urgently, regarding China.

Let's continue to discuss how best to go about this. As for sources, as I said, I haven't been keeping in touch. However, David Mandel in Montreal is a good bet (I may try to contact him explaining my intention to "catch up" with developments. Also, Boris Kagarlitsky is undoubtedly someone to check out. I'm not sure who, if anyone, he identifies with organizationally. But he certainly seems to be one of the most reliable sources from a revolutionary left perspective. Daniel Singer unfortunately died in 2000.

However, I can only assume there are colleagues of his who have continued to write on these sorts of issues. Finally, I'm not sure what New Left Review and possibly Monthly Review have published, but it's worth our checking out.

I look forward to the clippings on Russia.

Affectionately, Zane